826 immortal with smooth limbs, he became mortal and hard working. As seats of the male semen, they transmit this condition to the embryo, formed in the maternal womb by Faro. The weariness felt in the limbs after the sexual act is proof of this transmission. As Locus of [829] the virile semen, framework of the man, and a mechanism suitable for physical labor, the articulations are also the symbol of society. The chief's throne, in the shape of a knee, is the image of its owner's articulated body as well as that of the armature of the social body and of the grouping of individuals under his jurisdiction (1).

1. See p. 178.

826 The limbs represent the right and the left. Rectitude, firmness, 823 and directed action are "right"; incertitude, the spirit of indecision, 201 and inconsistency in behavior are "left." The right is male and symbolizes man's labor; the other is female. All gestures, profane and religious, and all representations of objects bear witness to this. Performing his first task in the fields before the rain, the farmer gives three blows with his hoe held in his left hand in order to absorb the impurity of the earth. After this, he works until the harvest with his right hand. To cross one's hands means supplication, to put them behind one's back means humiliation.

826 Each finger has its value. The little finger, bolokoni lakare, is 201 "the son of the other fingers" and in it is concealed the entire 576 strength of the hand; it "carries the nyama of the fingers." Hence its use as a measure of divinations. To point to someone with one's little finger means to belittle him with respect to those present. Thus one casts a spell (korti) against an enemy or an undesirable person with the little finger.

826 The index finger and the thumb of a chief, formerly those of a 622 king, are marked on certain occasions with signs called bolo ti doniya, "knowledge of the signs of the hand." On the index are drawn three "acts of the world today" (bi dyɛ̃ walew) and on the thumb, two "things of the interior of the secret world" (dyɛ̃ gundo kono fɛ̃w), for it is said that "the knowledge of the signs of the hand /70/ is the road of the creation 5, the index is the world in 3 and the thumb is the new world" (1). The whole represents the worlds thought out by

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622

1. Bolo ti doniya ye dali duru sira ye, bolokoni kumba dɔ̃ga ye dyɛ̃ saba gundo ye, tyemasa bolokoni ye dyɛ̃ dura ye.

yo, of which only the first is realized (2).

2. On the worlds thought out by yo, see pp. 23-26.

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On another level, the signs of the thumb are related to powers and those of the index to royal domains (fig. 1, nos. 8-12):

1. Sign zero (fu) represents the beginning of creation, the origin of all things. A curved segment extended from left to right denotes the dynamic quality of the universe. It is intersected by a multiplication sign expressing the infinite development of beings and things. But the vertical stroke crossing it on the left indicates both the cessation and the suppression of the whole (no. 11).

2. Sign of lightning. It expresses royal power and justice and is traced under the thumb ring of the king. The latter, when giving an order, would swing his hand, which means he is swinging lightning before those he addresses (no. 12).

3. Sign of the royal domain. The opening asserts the possible extension of the kingdom; the transversal bar is a protection of this kingdom from all destruction (no. 8).

4. Sign of the extension of this domain at the tree cardinal sides: east, west, and south (no. 9).

5. Sign of union. The oval represents the whole group of functionaries called tɔ̃dyɛ̃ and barodɛ̃, officers and councilors who administer the kingdom under the king's authority (no. 10).

826
[783]

As the feet are constantly in touch with the soil, they take on its impurity. An individual who has gone through severe purifications will need to avoid putting his feet on the ground during a period of time occasionally quite prolonged, for "to place one's toes on the ground is to put one's soul in contact with the impure earth" (1). It

[791]

1. The invention of the shoe is mythically linked to the notion of the earth's impurity; the wearer must therefore avoid this contact.

[422, category 116 — Analyst]

782 826 789 "To see the king is to see gold" (1).

1. Fama yele ye sanu yele ye.

He gave some of it to his wives and children who put it in their drinks in order "to inherit his place and his goods." This powder was offered at each sacrifice to Faro in order to fertilize the kingdom.

782 826 266 3. When a family was plagued by numerous deaths, they asked the king to authorize the sacrifice of an albino whom he furnished himself. The victim's tongue was dried, pounded to powder, seasoned with pepper, and eaten by the father of the family to permit him to "reclaim the words and the nyama of the deceased." The nose was swallowed by the mother so that she might "reclaim the breath of the dead children." The father then ate the broiled eyes to "preserve lost sights." The dried ears were hung above the sill of the entrance "so that death, upon hearing the funeral wails, might not return." The skull was retained as a token and buried in the courtyard; a wooden stick marked the burial place. The rest of the body was thrown into the Niger, "for an ordinary man does not have the right to keep that which is reserved for the king."

782 826 622 If the king permitted it, chiefs of the important villages /97/ also placed the body of an albino under their seats "in order that their authority be solid and enduring" (2).

2. Sometimes the sum total of the taxes raised in a village were given the parents of an albino in exchange for the child. Those who could not obtain a victim used an animal bone as a substitute and performed the ritual as though it were an albino. Regarding the chief's seat, see p. 178.

782 826 In certain serious cases, the albino was sacrificed on the altar of Komo. This sacrifice was accomplished in silence for "a prayer unknown to the person sacrificing is in the blood of the albino" who is powerful enough to act without words.

778 For this reason it receives sacrifices at the time when the fields
794 are being worked, for trade, marriage, war, and hunting where the
754 person risks his life; it helps to fight illness and death. Immediately after the first sacrifice, it captures the personality and aggressiveness of the dead man and puts them on its owner, making him doubly dangerous to those with whom he is in conflict. But on the other hand, the danger may turn against him and, to a greater extent than anyone else, he risks his life at the slightest broken taboo.

Furthermore, the Komo who disapproves of such operations may, if he considers it useful, loosen the dead man's nyama on the person who is using his spiritual forces and put him in danger of death. Thus a Bambara will hesitate a long time before owning such an altar; in fact very few individuals assume this heavy responsibility.

C. The Chief's Seat

778 In the courtyard of the home of a family head or village chief can
622 be found a pile of wood stuck on the ground and called dyamana tigi ǰigi (literally, support of the owner of the world) (Fig. 11). This seat symbolizes at once the chief, his power, his social and religious role of supporting the group (1).

1. The seat described below was observed at Banankoroni in the courtyard of the village chief. A similar one is found at Soroba.

The pieces of bent wood which compose it are planted rather deep into the earth above a series of objects. One of these pieces, with a simple bend (in a) is called sinzin, support; the two others, shaped like a T, are called ǰigi ba ǰigi (in b) (literally, support of the big support).

FA82 The whole lies over the body of an albino (c) buried in a tomb
766 having a ritual form, covered with ancient clothing dyed in wolo and speckled with small black spots made of /135/ bone ash (kolofin), which represent at the same time the embryo in the womb of women and Faro. The head is covered with the cap of primitive men (e).

In (d), three pickets, symbols of man, are stuck through the skin of the albino's forehead; this skin had been removed and seven ritual

scars symbolizing the person (three and four) are made on it. At the moment the skin is buried under the seat, the following prayer is recited:

"I have sworn in your names by striking on the siriku of Yamba by (burying) the skin from the right and left sides of the forehead; the skin from the forehead (seven times)" (1).

1. Tena wolo fla kini ani numa yamba

Fig. 11 — The wooden seat of a family head of Banankoroni, representing his joints. It is inserted into the ground in the courtyard above the bones of an albino, those of a child, and various symbolic objects. (Drawing by an informant.)

ka siriku nye di ka fo ani aw čua ye kena, tena wolo.

The prayer recalls here the acts of the fourth ancestor Yamba, who inaugurated the sacrifices of albinos to Faro, and his role as a chief beginning with this mythical period (see p. 46), a role which the present chief must fulfill with the same righteousness. The siriku is a small protective altar usually made from a hyena tail.

In (m) are placed the three principal bones of the albino; the two femurs and the right humerus, "so that the chief may have white

622 778 bones," that is to say, that he may live to be so old that his bones will be visible through his skin which is transparent.

In (n) the bent part of the wood, called kuntigi tigiya jigi (literally, /136/ support of the chief's deed), is planted over the hair of the previously shaved albino (in o) from which it takes its strength.

[801] In (k), twenty-two small sticks are the symbol of the number 22, representing "the ensemble of words received by the ancestor Koumabana who was never caught unawares by anyone." In depositing these sticks, the officiator expresses the wish that the chief may become unbeatable like the ancestor.

[801] In (h), eight small sticks of zekene wood (1) represent the eight

[824] 1. Balanites aegyptica. This bush, according to popular belief, grows over the tomb of a man who died "with rancor and bitterness, as did Koumabana."

ancestors; they signify that man must be, like Koumabana, master of words and that he must be "true to his word."

In (f), the bird tatugu kononi, master of fire, is buried. The prayer recited states that it must be able to penetrate into the earth and come out freely, for since mythical times it has played a decisive role in combats (2).

2. See p. 155. The chief, who is sometimes obligated to declare war, must be able to win it.

In (g) is buried the head of the first child to die in the chief's family, in order to recall the loss suffered and to avoid its recurrence. On the skull are marked the signs of the person: two times 3 and 7, or two times 4 and 7, depending upon the sex of the deceased. In (j) the hair is buried, a testimony to the misfortune and the loss which should be compensated for. In (e) is placed the skin of the forehead, divided into two pieces; the piece on the right signifies that Faro is free to give the child for as long as he chooses; on the piece on the left are engraved the eight signs of the word, recalling that Faro, master of the word, is also master of the destiny of the deceased, whose number has been reckoned among the dead. In (p) a small

622 178 of polished stone called fara yele, "stone that rejoices," expresses the wish that the chief's rule prosper.

The seat, taken as a whole, represents the chief's skeleton and his joints. It is erected upon various elements which sum up his ties to the ancestors and the supernatural powers, indicating his responsibility and contributing to the maintenance of his strength. It is situated in such a way that all the events in the courtyard take place around it, and that nothing which is said is out of earshot. As a center of the family household, as the symbol of the industrious and responsible man, it is the framework of the community which it upholds, just as the chief does through his physical endurance and moral firmness. The whole village "leans upon the chief's joint."

Each morning and evening, the ǰigi ba ǰigi and the ba ǰigi /137/ are greeted so that the chief may be strong, that his family may increase, that he may foster the ancestral beliefs. Offerings and [782] libations are made upon the seat and upon the body of the chief when his authority is questioned. In (b) tomato juice is being poured; in (a), representing the elbow or the knee, the water which has been used for ritual bathing of these same joints; at the foot, in (n), the fowls' throats are cut while the officiator, before pouring down the blood of the sacrifice, blows into a small hole dug in the ground; finally, in (l) the water which was used to wash the chief's whole body is poured in.

[826] In this way the chief's joints, which are the seat of his strength and his procreative seed, are purified and fortified.

II. Village Cults

794 The village, as a physical entity, and its inhabitants are placed under the protection of the supernatural powers and of the ancestors. Faro is directly invoked at all water spots.

If the village is situated at the river's edge, the rituals are addressed to the Faro tyin. If it is not too far from the bank, the inhabitants go out to make their offerings to the spirit. Frequently, the stream, pond, or natural well, which often determined the site chosen by the founders, is though to be inhabited by an incarnation of Faro whose name is revered and to whom all offer a cult.

On the other hand, each village is placed under the protection of the dasiri, a special spirit delegated by Faro.

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consisting of a rectangular pillar worn away by the rains.

[765] According to custom, the members of the ton' settled down in front of the deceased's house for a week, singing, dancing and generally carousing in the usual way.

When this traditional period was over, Mamari asked them to enclose his father's and his mother's houses within a single wall. They set to work and built a wall with only one door, [622] over which they placed the pyramidal ornaments used only for chiefs' doorways. Within the enclosure they left the existing division in two parts, and it was henceforth understood that the part formerly occupied by Mamari's father would be reserved for people from Doukounna when they wished to stay in Ségou.

Kassoum was determined to show that he had been properly brought up and knew how to return courtesy; so, one day, he invited Mamari to a drinking party, planned especially in his honor. Mamari accepted and, on arriving, found that Kassoum, from impatience no doubt, had started the celebration so far ahead that he was already dead drunk.

According to the usual custom, Mamari ordered one of the [273] ton-den', as it was his duty, to taste the dlo first (2). Lacking

2. A precautionary measure to guard against poison.

a utensil in which to pour a small quantity of the beer, the taster sipped from the crock itself. Kassoum jumped up in a fury, crying out that the ton-den' was a disgusting person, and [37] broke a gourd full of beer over the fellow's head. In turn, Mamari became angry at Kassoum, whose manners struck him as coarse and intolerable. Then, after much invective on both sides, Mamari left the place to return home. Kassoum took up his bow and arrows and set out after Mamari. However, since he was slowed down by his drunkenness, he could not go far and his arrows missed their mark. Mamari returned to Ségou and, for the first time, installed himself in his father's house.

311 Bambara seeks the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-
621 siri) or, more exactly, determines where this genie dwells. It
776 may be a spring, a hill, or a rock; often it is a fine tree, in-
794 variably surrounded by a grove or at least with a grove nearby.
Then, always following the same procedure, he finds out the conditions under which the genie will allow someone to settle in his domain in order to live there and cultivate the lands. Thus, a contract is worked out which governs the man's exploitation of the genie's territorial domain. As a result, provided he worships the genie in the manner required, the man [228] will be able to work under the protection of the god. Anyone who has had a share in the contract, even if only through representatives, will likewise profit if he scrupulously observes the conditions.

621 The establishment of a village requires the cooperation of
● 622 several communities, each represented by its fa. One of these fa
793 will either appropriate the leadership or be chosen as the rep-
794 resentative or chief of the others. Sometimes he may be merely primus inter pares; otherwise he may have managed to have his primacy conceded by the rest. It is this chief who treats with the genie in the name of the whole village; thus, he becomes the "high priest of the genie" (nyana-n-son-na-ba) with the essential function of "making the offerings" (son') required by the cult. Furthermore, he administers the earthly domain of the genie and is therefore called dugu-tigi (master of the earth).

To the nyana dugu-da-siri is usually attributed the same dyamu as that of its high priest, just as though the genie belonged to the spiritual family of the priest. This is a result consistent with the mentality of the Bambara.

621 The same mental state accounts for the custom in certain
776 villages of dedicating a living animal, often a ram, to the
778 nyana dugu-da-siri and believing it to be the god's mount. The
[825] animal is allowed to wander freely about the village, and its mischief is never punished; indeed, the people enjoy caressing and indulging it. The animal takes on some of the attributes of the genie and is, as it were, endowed with certain supernatural virtues, so only good can come from contact with it.

621 Theoretically, each settlement has only one genie, but
776 actually it may have several, especially if it has been settled by

621 (den'). Proof of this is seen in the fact that any important hap-
622 pening in a native's life is supposed to be reported to the dugu-tigi and in certain cases requires an offering or, as it is called, homage (bunya). We have seen this in the case of birth, giving a name, circumcision, marriage, and death. It is no less essential in cases of public disaster (epidemic, persistent drought, invasion, war).

621 In theory, the dugu-tigi does not intervene of his own
622 accord in the private affairs of the patriarchal or familial com-
692 munities which, when taken together, constitute the territorial unit we usually call a village (1). When a quarrel between rela-

> 1. The territorial community among the Bambara is called dugu, a term which at the same time means "land" and "among," "to," "within," etc., and which is preceded by a name recalling some circumstance involved with the founding of the village.

tives cannot be settled by the fa concerned, however, he asks for the intervention of the dugu-tigi and his council. If dissension arises between the people of different communities, the same arbitration is usually requested. As a result, a kind of tribunal of conciliation has evolved, which can only suggest what the parties should do or refrain from doing in order to put an end to the dispute. Theoretically, the dugu-tigi has no right to enforce the [232] verdict (1), because the communities are

> 1. That is why litigation may be indefinitely prolonged.

extremely jealous of their independence. As a consequence, they yield only to the extent that is in their best interests.

It may happen, however, that the dugu-tigi, supported by his council, does exert authority when he has the power and is seconded by notables who make common cause with him for

311 the community is founded. His permission is required before
621 anyone may build a dwelling in the portion reserved as the seat
423 of the community; the village is therefore kept within precise
793 limits. In practice, however, everyone builds wherever he pleases if there is no objection. If there is an objection, the dispute is settled by the dugu-tigi and his council.

423 Outside the village proper, the terrain includes fields
621 which, either at the start or during the course of settlement, are allotted in perpetuity to the various fa of the community by the dugu-tigi in council. Each fa and his dependents have indefinite use of the same fields, although by law the authority which assigned them may take them away without being required to justify the act. This use is a kind of usufruct that is more extensive than that of our law, since the beneficiary may
[425] use the land without restriction, except that he may not alienate it. The tenant, however, may not use the land in any way that might be prejudicial to the community as a whole without the consent of the dugu-tigi and council. For example, such would be the case if he proposed to give his right of use to an outsider.

Any land not specifically allotted [231] and anything it produces or contains belongs, theoretically, to the member of the community who cultivates it. Certain fruits or produce, however, are sometimes reserved for the community as a whole: the leaves or fruit of the baobab, karite, nété, tamarind trees, etc.; the fish in certain ponds, watercourses, fluvial zones,
[476] etc.; the game in certain cantons, etc. On the dates set for these collective enterprises by the dugu-tigi and his council, the people proceed in a body to gather fruit, harvest the crop, fish, or hunt. Sometimes each person is allowed to keep what he has gathered; sometimes all the proceeds are collected for the dugu-tigi to distribute according to custom. There are also special regulations governing the extraction of matter or materials from the ground.

621 Organization of the territorial community. The duties
●622 of the dugu-tigi and his council are not limited to directing the cult and regulating the use of land. Anything that happens within the territorial community concerns the nyana-dugu-da-siri, because the members of the community are his children

621 various reasons. Thus, the dugu-tigi in council can invoke
622 police powers to maintain order in the community and even act
692 as a tribunal to punish those whose misdeeds in any way endanger the persons or property of members of the community.

621 Since the genie is expected to ensure the prosperity of
622 the faithful, it is the duty of the dugu-tigi to come to the assist-
[735] ance of members of the community who are unfortunate or indigent.

He must also maintain the relations of his community with the outside world, that is, with neighboring territorial communities and all other groupings, analogous or otherwise. He can act independently only in matters which we call purely administrative; for other matters he must have the assent of the council of fa, above all for any matter involving the disposal of community property.

621 It is obvious that all the roles of the dugu-tigi involve
622 expense. hat are often considerable, but for this purpose he has
651 access to goods from many sources. In the first place, offerings made to the nyana are of various kinds; they are not always consumable, and even if they are, they are usually consumed only in part. The remainder belongs to the dugu-tigi. It is customary to give bunya (gifts of homage) to the dugu-tigi on many occasions: a hunt, a fishing expedition, millet harvest, etc.; to thank him for an allotment of land, or for some other service. Community property is farmed out for fees payable at fixed times, and tribute is paid in the same way. Most of the various kinds of infractions committed within the community are punished by fines received by the dugu-tigi. Incorrigible malefactors become slaves of the community, and the produce of their labors [233] goes to the dugu-tigi. Anything found abandoned on land belonging to the community is turned over to the dugu-tigi, in whole or in part.

In case of need arising through some exceptional emergency (war, an expedition, public works of various kinds, etc.), the dugu-tigi may have recourse to what we should call an emergency assessment, i.e., he may ask the members of the community for special contributions for the purpose.

621 These are the principal resources of the community
622 treasury, which is held and administered by the dugu-tigi with
651 the help and under the control of the fa. The dugu-tigi may
652 use the treasury to help him perform his duties honorably, to assist unfortunate or indigent members of the community, to receive the guests of the community in a suitable manner, and to meet emergencies.

[661] Under no circumstances does this treasury constitute any part of the personal fortune of the dugu-tigi. Only usurpation, which is fairly common under various guises, alters this state of affairs. In the same way, it is not uncommon for this wealth to be divided in some measure among the members of the council, who in one way or another appropriate it. Such abuses, no matter how common, do not in the least alter the principle that legally such wealth is and remains exclusively the property of the community. [234]

Chapter 4

Brotherhoods

1. The End of Childhood

794 General considerations. The cult of the ancestors and of
881 the nyana dugu-da-siri are not enough for the Bambara in his efforts to make sure of the protection, help, and services of the invisible world. The magician has created for him some renowned protectors or servitors which are powerful and formidable: the nyana of the boli.

The cult of these gods gives rise to spiritual families whose members are so closely linked by the bonds of fraternity that we may safely say that these groupings are brotherhoods. All these brotherhoods share the common characteristic that no one can be received into them before having submitted to a certain rite called soli (1) or bolo-ko (1), terms which

1. Soli is the word for the action of piercing, emerging, laying an egg, or

596 The fa. -- The whole of this family obeys the same head: the fa. The fa is designated by a council of elders when he fulfills the following conditions: first, not to refuse the faya and to be a [567] member of the community, that is, actually to live within the community; next, he must never have been a slave, and he must not have settled abroad without hoping to return home. In addition, he [848] must be a legitimate child, that is to say, born in wedlock, and the firstborn. In principle, the faya passes from older to younger brother (in the classificatory sense of the term). Thus, the fa is always the member of each generation closest to the ancestor. Finally, the fa must be able, that is, healthy, active, and a good administrator. Often the fa designates his successor before his death. The successor may assume power only 40 days after the death of the last fa, and after being recognized as head of the family by the assembly of elders. From that moment on, he exercises his functions, come what may.

The fa has charge of, and the moral and physical responsibility for, the whole community. He directs and protects all the members of the family. These latter can escape his authority only by leaving the village for good; they are then considered to be dead members. (The descendants of the fa by his daughters are outside of the community; they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.)

The fa, head of the family, lives under the administrative dependence of the head of the village.

2. From Family to Community

621 The true social unit is the community. Ties of kinship and marriage unite groups without racial or ethnic unity.

a. Patriarchal Organization of the "Ton." -- All the family
● 622 heads obey a village head: it is on him that the responsibility falls for the organization of the community territory, as well as the responsibility for administering justice when contention arises between followers of different faya. The village chief is generally master of the land: dugu-kolo-tigi; sometimes [54] he cedes his rights to a village administrative chief younger than himself, but in matters of religion he remains all-powerful, and each year he receives gifts from the different family heads for the needs of the common cult. He also

622 gives the orders concerning local celebrations and initiations.

In fact, the land originally belongs to spirits, and the chief 622 776 who succeeds the founder of the village is the only one who is able to establish contact with the chief of the spirits and negotiate with him. He is the earthly administrator of the spirit; he assures his worship, the exploitation of the land, and the organization of the community territory.

621 622 The first chief of the land was the first occupant; the succeeding chiefs are his heirs, following the order of succession. To found a new village, a chief chooses a place in unoccupied territory, usually at a crossroads, near a water source, near a baobab, [778 824] a doubalé, or other sacred tree. He offers sacrifices to the spirits and receives in exchange their authorization to settle. If his group prospers, and less fortunate families want to establish themselves in this well-favored location, they ask the chief for authorization. However, as Monteil (1) remarks: "... The fa of a familial community depends strictly on the patriarchy only if, attached to it by the male line, he holds some goods of the patriarchy or if he claims rights in this patriarchy. In the contrary case, the family fa conducts himself as a stranger in relation to the patriarchy, which can only treat him in like fashion ..." Every familial community becomes patriarchal at the death of the family head when he has no heirs (see the chapter on inheritance); the community then groups around itself familial communities which themselves include paternally related groups and maternally related groups. When the patriarchy is an old one, a considerable number of persons live under its aegis. All recognize dyamu and taboos (see below) in common.

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

621 631 When the settlement becomes too populous, a fa gathers a group and founds another village. Afterwards, the people of neighboring districts may solicit the patronage of the first village, by participating in its djo (2) and by sacrificing to its guardian spirits.

2. See the chapter on religion.

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701 3. The ton-koro-bolo behind the disi is a special reserve formed entirely of pure ton-dyon.

4. The keli-tigi was the chief of the expedition, designated by the Fama. He might be a dyon-kuntigi (chief of the furuba-dyon), a member of the Fama's community, or the Fama himself.

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534 Finally, the army was accompanied by a musical corps, composed essentially of drums which transmitted messages. There were armpit drums (dunkan'), shoulder drums (taura), three-legged drums (dange), drums carried by two men (tabala), and coupled drums (denuba). Often horns (buru) were added, sometimes small horns made of ivory or horn, and sometimes xylophones (bada) and cowbells.

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537 A dyeli (griot) follows the expedition to observe the exploits that he must retransmit; he must encourage the warriors and dispel panic by the power of his oratory.

B. Influence of Social Organization on Economic Life

a. The ton, Work Community

621 We have seen that the social unit among the Bambara is the community. The community is also the work unit and the economic unit. The independent individual is not conceived of. The community owns all the wealth which makes up the spiritual and material patrimony: the land, the agricultural, industrial, and commercial products, the habitations ...

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[431] The community regulates the exploitation of the land. The dugu-tigi is the first occupant, master of the land, of which he distributes the lots to the different family heads. When a stranger, a family head, wants to enter into a community, he chooses an unoccupied field and asks the village chief for it. The request is accompanied by ten kola nuts and a chicken. Authorization cannot then be refused. The chief of the land sacrifices the chicken before the entire community and informs it of the installation of the newcomer. When the stranger wants to leave the land, he is given back his chicken and kola nuts.

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622 Land assigned to a family head may always be taken back from him without justification by the dugu-tigi and his council.

423 621 622 Thus, the man holding the land can neither sell it nor take any action regarding it which would involve the interests of the whole community; but he can rent it out, pledge it, or [62] cede it, which leads to manifold disputes at the time of redistribution of the land in the case of cyclical cultures.

621 622 652 The dugu-tigi also prepares the community's budget. The resources include: gifts made to the gods, thanksgiving offerings for the hunt, for the fishing catch, and for the millet harvest, payments for concession of land or for services rendered, rent of community goods (fixed revenues or exceptional tribute), receipts from fines, confiscations, escheatage, and finally, the extraordinary aid formerly obtained for war, constructions, etc.

[65] 746 Among the expenditures are included the cost of supporting members of the community if need be, of maintaining the proper appearance, assistance to the sick, and, especially, the tax or tribute formerly paid to the sovereign, legitimate or not, and today paid to the French administration.

596 The family patrimony (tien) is administered by the fa, head of the family. A. Aubert (1) gives us the composition of this

1. A. Aubert, Coutume bambara (cercle de Bougouni) [Bambara Custom (Bougouni Circle)].

patrimony which includes: "Rights on the lands cultivated by the community; animals; serfs; money owed and money owing; the dowries of the daughters and women who are issue of members of the settlement; the inheritances; the dwellings of the settlement and their furnishings; the foodstuffs of the communal granaries (foro-ba), and, in general, all wealth resulting from the communal work of the family members."

Moreover, the fa must: "see to the material life of all the members of the family; provide dowries for the women of the community; pay back the dowries of the women of the community who are to be divorced; ransom members of the family who are taken prisoner or are sold, and pay taxes in goods or in money."

b. Organization of Work

241 621 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations [622 are set in motion by the dugu-tigi and are regulated by the fa who 516] assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

316 423 The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil belongs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the [326] blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To- [439] day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

463 554 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of nyaman-kala, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.

692 In matters of justice, the Bambara frequently continue to consult their old tribal judges. It must be noted, however, that in taking [177 away the judicial competence of the old chiefs, the French ad- 622] ministration has contributed to diminishing, and almost to completely destroying, their power.

The Bambara had a judicial organization quite as precise and 671 regulated as their religious organization, although there was no codified law, such as the Koran or the Hebrew tables of law. Justice was rendered according to rules which each community passed on from generation to generation. These rules are not of divine origin, but they [69] are sacred nevertheless, for custom is the legacy of [643 the ancestors. The Fama and his council of notables could promul- 645] gate new laws, but, before deciding on a new rule, they consult the Komo and the Nyama [an altar]. Then, in the presence of a priest, each one swears on the altar to obey the law which becomes sacred. Moreover, the customary rules cannot be separated from the moral [184] code and the religion to which they are linked. They are not uniform; each canton has its own, and often each village, and within each of these there are observances peculiar to certain families or to certain castes. Nevertheless, the sentiment of fair play is very strong [181] among the Blacks, but they do not admit the equality of men, who are naturally different one from another according to their aptitudes, means, and condition.

Custom regulates all relations between individuals and between individuals and the collectivity.

692 Two sorts of native tribunals existed in the Bambara country: a tribunal of conciliation, presided over by the village chief, who assembled a council of notables; and a high tribunal presided over by the Fama, to whom were submitted the matters which the first tribunal had been unable to settle. In addition, the Fama could call before his tribunal the civil or penal matters which seemed to him to be of importance to the public order.

695 Justice was without charge and rendered day and night by the 643 Fama as one of his essential functions, for the judge is the one who repairs the disorders that shake society. The hearings were solemnly conducted and took place under the silk-cotton tree (Ceiba pentandra)